



# Sunshine Coast Events Board Annual Report 2020/21

Delivering the Sunshine Coast  
Major Events Strategy 2018-2027

Edition November 2021

**[sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](http://sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)**

[mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)

**T 07 5475 7272**

Locked Bag 72 Sunshine Coast Mail Centre Qld 4560

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### **Acknowledgements**

Council wishes to thank all contributors and stakeholders involved  
in the development of this document.

### **Disclaimer**

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Some images displayed in this publication were taken prior  
to the implementation of COVID-19 restrictions.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the traditional Country  
of the Kabi Kabi Peoples and the Jinibara Peoples of the  
coastal plains and hinterlands of the Sunshine Coast and  
recognise that these have always been and continue to be  
places of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance.  
We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and  
emerging – and acknowledge the important role Aboriginal  
and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within the  
Sunshine Coast community.

Cover and current page image: Australian Surf Life Saving Championships.







Sunshine Coast Beach 5s Rugby Festival.



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**Maya Gurry**  
Chairperson

Another highlight was ‘the Aussies’, the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, which attracted thousands of participants and spectators to the beaches of Mooloolaba, Alexandra Headland and Maroochydore in April 2021

## Chair’s Report

The significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the events space saw us enter 2020/21 with much uncertainty and trepidation. The financial year began just four months into the rise of the pandemic — vaccines were not yet a reality and the events industry was still reeling in the wake of lockdowns and severe restrictions on public gatherings.

The roadmap to the return of major events was unclear and the unpredictability of snap lockdowns and border closures continued to challenge the industry, resulting in the cancellation of 24 events across the 2020/21 year.

Despite these testing conditions, the Sunshine Coast still hosted 46 major events which attracted nearly 92,000 visitors to the region, delivering an estimated \$50.5 million in economic benefit and generating around 500 full-time equivalent jobs.

Images and stories of Sunshine Coast events peppered the media, with outlets looking for good news stories during challenging times, seeing our events deliver a total audience reach of almost 84 million views.

While there are usually a number of events jostling for position in the action-packed first quarter of our calendar, continued lockdowns meant our first major event in 2020/21 to return was the Ironman 70.3 in September 2020. This event showed that with the right planning and preparation (and, during COVID, a bit of luck), hosting events was still possible providing operators and suppliers with some confidence around the safe return of events.

Another highlight was ‘the Aussies’, the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, which attracted thousands of participants and spectators to the beaches of Mooloolaba, Alexandra Headland and Maroochydore in April 2021.

We secured the rights to seven Melbourne Storm NRL games with strong crowds and national broadcast, and first-time events such as Beach 5s Rugby and the Kiteboarding Australia Freestyle Nationals. This was in addition to signature events such as the Mooloolaba Triathlon and the ever-popular Blackall 100, which sold out within hours reflecting the massive increase in demand for off-road events this year.

Coming into the 2020/21 year, the Sunshine Coast Events Board reverted to face-to-face meetings, following our weekly online meetings from March to June 2020 to support Council’s Major Events Unit during tumultuous times and complex contract renegotiations.

The Board and Working Groups also met for a strategic workshop in August 2020 to explore a number of topics including but not limited to resurgence strategies, KPI targets, the role/value of events in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery phase and budgetary considerations in an ever-changing landscape.

This workshop led to the launch of a number of new initiatives — some of which had not historically been within the remit of the Board, however in current conditions were appropriate to ensure the events industry was in the best position to emerge and thrive post-pandemic.

Two temporary sub-committees were created, one to explore the health of the local events industry with key influencers and help build a stronger local events economy, and another to better assess the promotional value of our events and encourage operators to promote the Sunshine Coast to their audiences.

In another exciting development, increasing the visibility of our events calendar was further boosted thanks to the establishment of a dedicated events website: [events.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](https://events.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)

There were no changes to the structure of the Board this year, however we welcomed Tatiana Day, Ultan O'Dwyer and Jo Prothero to the Working Groups.

To the Board and Working Group members, thank you for your ongoing commitment. I don't underestimate how much time went into reviewing and analysing 31 major event applications — all but one were recommended to and endorsed by Council. We are extremely fortunate to have such high calibre individuals on our team and your insight and wisdom are truly valued.

I would also like to acknowledge the Visit Sunshine Coast team, not only for the promotional support they provide for our events, but also for their valuable contributions to our discussions at both a Board and Working Group level.

Also, I extend my thanks to Mayor Mark Jamieson, his Councillors and the exceptional team in the Tourism and Major Events Unit at Sunshine Coast Council. We appreciate your trust and the unwavering support for our Board and its processes and can assure you that our commitment to rebuilding our events portfolio and strengthening our reputation as one of Australia's leading regional event destinations has never been greater.

I firmly believe the Sunshine Coast's reputation as a safe, cooperative and agile event destination will continue to stand us in good stead as we aim to deliver an action-packed 2020/21 event calendar to drive economic benefit to the Sunshine Coast community.

Maya Gurry



Top: AFL Queensland Schools Cup  
Bottom: Ironman 70.3 Sunshine Coast.  
Credit Ironman



**Councillor Jason O'Pray**  
Portfolio Councillor  
for the Economy

## Foreword

Major Events continue to evolve and thrive on the Sunshine Coast! Throughout another year of challenging circumstances during 2020/21, the Sunshine Coast Events Board, along with Council's Tourism and Major Events Unit, continued to support and build the region's reputation as a leading host of major events. Council's role included working closely with existing events to provide all possible support to enable them to successfully operate and adapt, and in responding quickly to a large number of events and activities which needed to find new locations as COVID-19 pandemic restrictions continued to evolve across Australia.

The region's ability to continue to host national level events such as the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships ('the Aussies') in April and the 2021 NRL Women's State of Origin in June was demonstrated by the visitor numbers and media impact still able to be achieved in 2020/21. In addition to adapting these pre-planned projects, we were also able to work with a significant list of major national sporting teams (including the NRL, Suncorp Super Netball Australia, and preparing athletes ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics) to host matches, training and recovery. These outputs have significantly increased the knowledge and reputation of the region as a successful and safe destination to host great events.

The success of maintaining a significant events program over the past two years, along with the recent announcement of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games (with many events scheduled to be hosted on the Sunshine Coast) have resulted in a significant increase in approaches from events of all types which are looking at relocating or developing new products and businesses within our region. We believe that the Sunshine Coast is now in a very strong position to maximise the benefits for residents, businesses and our local economy over the next eleven years.

I would like to recognise the significant time and effort invested once again by members of the Sunshine Coast Events Board and its associated Working Groups. I would also like to thank our local businesses and the residents and visitors who support them, for collaboratively navigating the challenges of the 2020/21 year.

I remain optimistic there are better times ahead and we have seen strong signs of economic resurgence on many fronts. We look forward to working with you all in the year ahead.

**Councillor Jason O'Pray**



'In 2020/21 the Sunshine Coast hosted 46 major events, attracting nearly 92,000 visitors to the region'



Top: National Youth Touch Football Championships Middle left to right: Sunshine Coast Beach 5s Rugby; Blackall 100  
Bottom left to right: Caloundra Triathlon; Melbourne Storm v Wests Tigers; NRL Women's State of Origin. Image: National Rugby League.



Melbourne Storm v Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs

# The Sunshine Coast Events Board

## Board Membership

Following a year of major changes in 2019/20, Board membership remained static during 2020/21 with no retirements or new appointments occurring. The nine members prescribed under the Charter represented the community, business, Tourism and Events Queensland, Visit Sunshine Coast and Council, led by an independent Chairperson.

Visit Council's website for Board Member biographies.  
[sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](http://sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)



**Maya Gurry**  
Chairperson  
Community  
representative



**Brenda LaPorte**  
Deputy Chairperson  
Tourism and Events  
Queensland  
Representative



**Kim McCosker**  
Community  
representative



**Scott Hoskins**  
Business  
representative



**John Williams**  
Business  
representative



**Paul Smith**  
Business  
representative



**David Ryan**  
Chairman of Visit  
Sunshine Coast



**Cr Jason O'Pray**  
Council  
representative



**Cr Terry Landsberg**  
Council  
representative

## Working Groups

The retirement of some Board and Working Group members in 2019/20 left vacancies on the Working Groups.

A specialist local recruitment agency was engaged by Council to recruit potential Board and Working Group members, with Ms Tatiana Day and Mr Ultan O'Dwyer ultimately appointed by Council.

During its deliberations, the Board also recommended to Council that the functions of the New Events Working Group would be aided greatly through the involvement of Visit Sunshine Coast's (VSC) Head of Marketing, with Ms Jo Prothero being duly appointed.

## Existing Portfolio Working Group

The role of the Existing Portfolio Working Group is to develop and retain existing major events and maximise their value by advocating to/educating community and business groups, leveraging with business groups and tourism operators, and identify infrastructure/investment needs.



Brenda LaPorte  
Chairperson



John Williams



Fraser Green\*



Lenny Vance\*



Ultan O'Dwyer\*  
Appointed  
October 2020



Jo Prothero  
VSC CEO nominee  
Appointed October  
2020 Resigned  
March 2021

\*Non-Board member representatives of the Working Group who were appointed through an external professional recruitment process.



Coast to Coast Dragon Boat Festival

## New Major Events Working Group

The role of the New Major Events Working Group is to identify opportunities to secure new major events, and review and comment on sponsorship applications for new events.



**Paul Smith**  
Chairperson



**Maya Gurry**



**Scott Hoskins**



**Cr Terry Landsberg**



**Stacey Buckley\***



**Tatiana Day\***  
Appointed  
September 2020



**Jo Prothero**  
VSC CEO nominee  
Appointed October  
2020 Resigned  
March 2021

\*Non-Board member representatives of the Working Group who were appointed through an external professional recruitment process.



Sunshine Coast Multisport Festival

## Board Meetings



Top: Australian Surf Life Saving Championships  
Middle: Triathlon Pink  
Bottom: Surfing Queensland Series

Face-to-face meetings resumed in July 2020 after the COVID-19 pandemic forced previous meetings to be conducted via weekly teleconferences. All meetings were conducted in compliance with the relevant Queensland Health regulations in place at the time.

Board members were keen to acquaint themselves with various venues in the region and experience first-hand the challenges facing businesses and patrons in the new COVID-19 pandemic environment.

Meetings and workshops were held at Flaxton Gardens, Malt Shovel Taphouse, Maroochy RSL, Maroochydore Surf Club, Mooloolaba Surf Club, Sunshine Coast Stadium, Surfair Beach Hotel, The Events Centre Caloundra, The Lakehouse and Twin Waters Golf Club.

In addition to considering applications for sponsorship, the Board conducted a Strategy Workshop in August 2020 at which it reviewed:

- Board and Working Group role distinction
- Major events sponsorship budget
- Resurgence Plan strategies
- KPI targets for 2020/21
- Role/value of events in COVID-19 recovery phase
- Measuring and assessing event impacts on information needs of the Board to support a strategic role, and
- Tactical actions to achieve resurgence objectives.

A range of tools and resources were improved as a result of the workshop:

- The nature and detail of sponsorships included in Board briefing papers, making the information easier to consume and streamlining the process
- The relevance of setting Key Performance Indicator targets in the volatile environment, determining that it was more important to retain existing events and encourage participants to visit the region while garnering as much marketing and publicity as possible by tapping into Visit Sunshine Coast's resources
- Council's Economic Resurgence Plan
- The local supply chain and exploration of a directory of local suppliers, supporting Council's Buy Local practices
- The role of the Board and its Working Groups and particularly the need to work differently during the COVID-19 pandemic meant that the two Working Groups conducted combined meetings until November 2020.

Board members were keen to acquaint themselves with various venues in the region and experience first-hand the challenges facing businesses and patrons in the new COVID-19 pandemic environment.

Additionally, two steering groups were formed to consider additional topics:

- **Event Industry Development and Networking Group** – conduct conversations with key influencers to gain a better understanding of their perception of the health of the local industry, their aspirations and challenges to help build a stronger local event economy
- **Regional Marketing, Promotion and Messaging Group** – to encourage promotion of the destination; the use of VSC’s Event Promoter’s Kit; and the inclusion of VSC’s Head of Marketing on the Working Groups, increasing the outcomes achieved from regional marketing, promotion and messaging through sponsored major events.



## Attendance at Meetings

The following table shows member attendance at Board and Working Group meetings throughout 2020/21.

Meeting Attendance	Sunshine Coast Events Board	Existing Portfolio Working Group	New Major Events Working Group
Maya Gurry	7/7	-	6/6
Brenda LaPorte	7/7	5/6	-
Kim McCosker	5/7	-	-
Scott Hoskins	5/7	-	5/6
Paul Smith	7/7	-	5/6
John Williams	7/7	6/6	-
David Ryan	7/7	-	-
Cr Jason O'Pray	6/7	-	-
Cr Terry Landsberg	2/2 (temporarily stepped down)	-	4/6
Fraser Green	-	6/6	-
Stacey Buckley	-	-	5/6
Lenny Vance	-	4/6	-
Tatiana Day	-	-	2/5
Jo Prothero	-	3/4	4/4
Ultan O'Dwyer	-	5/5	-



Top: Barbershop Harmony Australia Regional Convention  
Middle: Downunder Beachfest  
Bottom: Mooloolaba Triathlon

46 events went ahead in 2020/21 generating an estimated \$50.5 million in economic activity and a return on investment of 1:21



Sunshine Coast Beach 5s Rugby Festival

## The Annual Report

The Board is required to report progress on the implementation of the *Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2027* to Council on an annual basis.

Implementation of the Strategy is measured against a suite of Key Performance Indicators which were developed to monitor the achievement of the overall objectives of the Strategy.

	Target 2019/20	Actual 2019/20	Target 2020/21*	Actual 2020/21**
Estimated economic return on regional investment in major events	\$74.0 million	\$70.0 million	\$50.0 million	\$50.5 million
Return on Investment (ROI) to the region as a consequence of Council's investment	1:32	1:30	1:24	1:21
Value of local spend by event managers	\$4.5 million	\$4.2 million	\$2.21 million	\$2.7 million
Number of participants and supporters from outside the region	150,000	136,469	95,000	91,736
Estimated number of total jobs supported	821	790	558	500
Number of:				
• Major events in portfolio	60	54	52	46
• Major events retained (net)	42	36		35
• New major events and regional events sourced and secured	18	8		11
• Business events		10		0

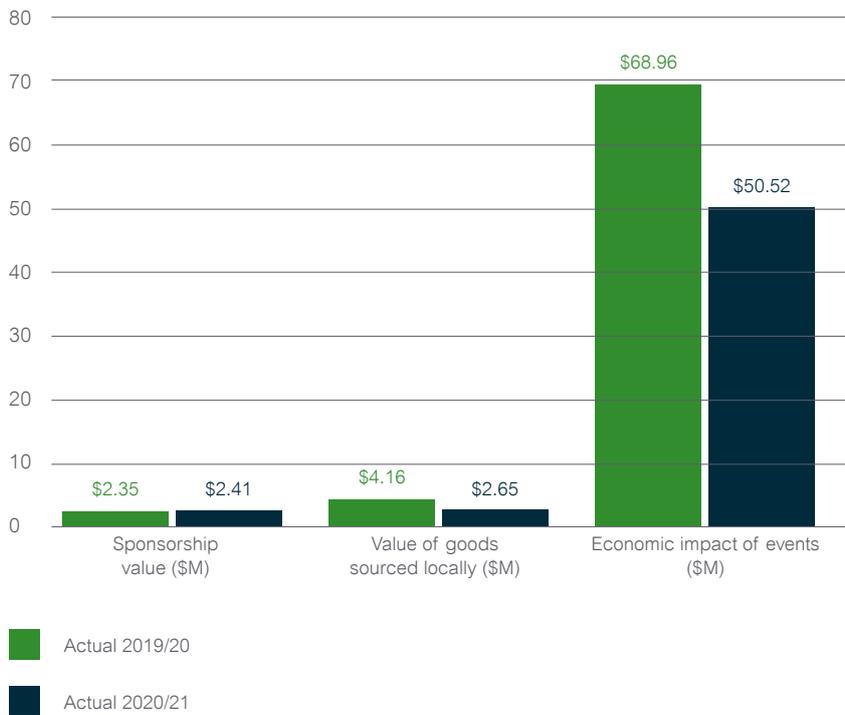
\* The 2020/21 target was reviewed prior to the commencement of the financial year and was significantly reduced due to the likelihood of COVID-19 pandemic border closures impacting on participant numbers at major events.

\*\* The major event outcomes for 2020/21 have been calculated from event acquittal reports where available. In the absence of an acquittal report, the result has been assessed against sponsorship application data or past performance.

In addition to the economic benefits, the Major Events Sponsorship Program delivers for the region by attracting, supporting and leveraging events that:

- 1 Maximise the Sunshine Coast as a destination and increase the region's appeal to potential visitors
- 2 Showcase the Sunshine Coast as a destination and increase the region's appeal to potential visitors
- 3 Use the audience reach of major events to promote the Sunshine Coast within target audiences
- 4 Spread the impacts and benefits as widely as possible across the region and the calendar year
- 5 Promote and engage the region's high value industries, and
- 6 Are in keeping with Sunshine Coast community values and Council's vision to be Australia's most sustainable region – healthy, smart, creative.

### Results from Council's investment in major events





Queensland Oztag Senior State Cup



State Age Championships



## The impact of COVID-19 pandemic

In a challenging year, the Sunshine Coast achieved many positive outcomes, despite the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and consequent border closures, uncertainty and travel restrictions around the country.

### On the positive side

- Some events transformed into online digital experiences:
  - Sunshine Coast Marathon took place virtually in August 2020 with 849 runners registered to run virtually, with over 25% of runners from interstate or international. The event raised \$6087 for charity and community groups. Social media was extremely active across the weekend, with runners sharing their journey via the hashtag #sunnycoastmara.
  - Queensland Garden Expo, having cancelled its July 2020 event, held an online digital event in September 2020 which was attended by over 34,000 participants and deemed a great success. The guest speaker program was first-class, and presenters were very supportive, taking people online into their own gardens – testament to the organiser’s long-standing relationship with those speakers.
- The Blackall 100 was officially sold out in all events (100km, 50km and 21km) and waiting lists were ceased due to the high volume of enquiries.
- The Downunder Beachfest took place in partnership with the Chilli Festival. Beachfest saw a reduction in cars from late cancellations, however, delivered a successful event for Downtown Caloundra.
- While sponsorship funds were returned to the budget due to event cancellations, new investments were identified which enabled the region to support seven Melbourne Storm NRL games at Sunshine Coast Stadium, with resulting visitation and prime time national broadcast coverage.

**‘Lots of great pre-race info and very interactive social media on the day. Was stoked with the medal! Wish I could have travelled to the Sunshine Coast, but this was the next best thing.’**

**EVENT FEEDBACK – SUNSHINE COAST MARATHON**

- Two industry networking functions were initiated in partnership with EventX and promoted to event organisers titled 'Tackling the Tricky Questions' concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first held in October 2020 provided an opportunity for the industry to connect with Jake Grant, Special Counsel at McCullough Robertson Lawyers; Simon Calabrese, Marsh Advantage Insurance; Leonard Chong, Tourism and Events Queensland; and Sophie Dwyer, Queensland Health, to address organisers' burning questions.

The second scheduled in November 2020 engaged a panel of industry experts comprising Rebecca Van Poos, Head of Operations Ironman Oceania; Tatiana Day, Director Day Communications and Consulting; and Craig Undery, Events General Manager Experience Oz; on protecting an event brand, maximising the spectator compliance, and building consumer confidence in ticketing policies.

Both functions were well attended demonstrating the industry's hunger for content of this nature. They provided attendees with the confidence and capability to run events in the COVID-19 environment.

Through a post event survey, 94% of attendees rated the session as above average to excellent; and 79% of attendees reported an increase in confidence in one or more of the subject areas covered.

- The Tourism and Major Events Unit called on industry to assist with the development of a directory of local event industry businesses that had the skills, knowledge and experience required to deliver and support COVID-safe events. The directory will be under construction in 2021/22. Feedback and input was gained from the industry to help start the process.
- The Tourism and Major Events Unit delivered individual service to major event promoters and industry partners which included:
  - Checking in on promoters and working through the issues they faced
  - Working through information on Council and government resources for businesses
  - Receiving briefings on event status (cancellations, postponements), and further planning for events
  - Reviewing and processing post event reports and resolving acquittal issues
  - Consulting on Council's stance on contracts not yet executed
  - Consulting on Council's current stance on new major event applications
  - Consulting on Deeds of Variations to event contracts
  - Engaging with the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service Public Health Unit with questions on behalf of event promoters.



'Tackling the Tricky Questions' COVID-19 Workshop

- 
- Council's Communications Branch supported the Tourism and Major Events Unit by maintaining public confidence in health and safety at events – ensuring messaging and imagery supported the notion that ratepayers and the community were not placed at risk by events.
  - COVID-safe banners were installed for the resumption of major events in September 2020 to generate bright and positive welcome messages for our residents and visitors, particularly around areas hosting Council sponsored major events – including NRL, netball, Ironman 70.3 and more.
  - A Meetings Incentives Conferences Expos Venues and Industry Leadership Group was established as a platform to share understandings on the current successes and challenges experienced by the industry; develop and implement short to medium term collective strategies to safeguard the Sunshine Coast's current market share; and identify and problem solve barriers to the industry's recovery and resurgence.

## The challenges

While a number of positive outcomes were achieved, there is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the region.

The challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the previous financial year continued throughout 2020/21 with public health directions announced by the Queensland Government limiting mass gatherings and border closures taking their toll.

- No events allowed to take place between March and September 2020.
  - A total of 24 events were cancelled during the financial year which equated to a projected loss to the region of \$44 million in economic benefit.
  - Event promoters suffered a loss of confidence in not only attracting international participants, but also those from interstate.
  - Due to the events being rescheduled outside the lockdown period, it became impossible for some promoters to secure a suitable alternate date.
  - Refund policies were challenged with some events offering 100% refunds to attract participants.
  - Many of the events which did proceed were unable to achieve their original visitor night and economic impact projections.
  - The challenges and risks faced by organisers completing the onerous and mandatory COVID-Safe Plans which Queensland Health could not approve until very near the event date.
- 



Barbershop Harmony Australia Regional Convention

# Achievements

## Major Events Sponsorship Program

The Board considered 31 major and business event sponsorship applications during the year. 30 were supported and subsequently endorsed by Council, with 11 of the 30 being contracted across multiple years:

Projects supported were:

- AOCRA National Sprint Championships and Trans-Tasman Gubbi Gubbi Waka Ama 2021/22
- Art of Attraction Tourism Summit 2021
- Australian Cycling Academy 2020/21 to 2022/23
- Australian Surf Life Saving Championships (3 events between 2023 and 2032)
- Sunshine Coast Beach 5s Rugby 2021
- Blackall 100 2021 to 2023
- Cali Unite 2021
- Caloundra Triathlon 2021 to 2023
- Coast to Coast Dragon Boat Festival 2021
- Football Queensland Community Cup 2021 to 2023
- G8 Education National Conference
- Kiteboarding Australia Freestyle Nationals 2021
- Maximum Adventure Race Series 2021
- Melbourne Storm Games 2020/21
- Mooloolaba Triathlon 2022 to 2024
- National Masters Cycling Championships 2021
- National Table Tennis Championships 2021
- Queensland Gymnastics Club Championships 2021 to 2023
- Queensland Surf Life Saving Championships 2022, 2023 and 2025
- Shimano GP Sunshine Coast and Rocky Trail Academy 2021
- South Pacific Championships Sunshine Coast (CrossFit) 2021
- Sunshine Coast Comedy Festival 2021
- Sunshine Coast Multisport Festival 2021 to 2023
- The Old Woman Ocean Paddle 2021
- The Wellness Tourism Summit 2021
- Triathlon Queensland Event Weekend 2021



Top: Caloundra Triathlon  
Middle: Australian Surf Life Saving Championships  
Bottom: Sunshine Coast Beach 5s Rugby Festival

During 2020/21, sponsored major events supported an estimated 500 jobs in the local economy

- UIC 2021 Australian Medicinal Cannabis Symposium
- Under 18 Women's Softball State Championships 2022 and Under 18 Men's Softball State Championships 2023
- UniSport Nationals – Surfing and T20 Cricket 2021
- Urban Polo Sunshine Coast 2021 to 2023.

Following the success of the 2016 and 2021 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships held in the region, Council negotiated a deal to secure three Championships during the period 2023 to 2032. The Aussies program generally consists of over 400 events and on average, 313 surf life saving clubs contest the event. In recent years, the Aussies have attracted well over 6000 participants and over 400 officials and event volunteers, along with thousands of spectators.

During 2020, Council successfully managed the execution of one of the most significant sponsorship agreements, being the two-year agreement of the NRL Women's State of Origin. The first match was held on 13 November 2020 and the second on 25 June 2021. Both matches were held to sell-out crowds with prime-time free-to-air national broadcast coverage.

In addition to the standard sponsorship benefits secured under the agreement, sponsorship of the 2020 NRL Women's State of Origin enabled Council to host an industry fam that included representatives from Queensland Rugby League, Queensland Rugby Union, Water Polo Australia, UniSport Australia, Johnathan Thurston Academy, Melbourne Storm and Football Queensland; as well as University of the Sunshine Coast Sport and the SportsHub, that has set the region up for new major events leads that will support the economic recovery.

Labelled the most exclusive women's sporting event of the year and an unmatched industry networking opportunity for sports business professionals, the Women in Sport Summit 2021 was held in conjunction with the 2021 NRL Women's State of Origin. The Summit attracted over 150 delegates from leading brand and sports teams, and state and national sporting bodies to the event. Presenters included Deputy Director General, 2032 Taskforce, Hon Kerry Peterson; COO FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, Ms Jane Fernandez (via Zoom); CEO Queensland Rugby League, Mr Rohan Sawyer; CEO Sunshine Coast Lightning, Ms Danielle Smith; Director of Operations, Big Bash Leagues, Ms Belinda Kaey, with Ms Kate Jones the Master of Ceremonies.

Council also secured the rights to host seven Melbourne Storm NRL games, with the first played in July 2020 against the Gold Coast Titans. Many of these games were a sell out at Sunshine Coast Stadium, within the limits in place under the relevant COVID Safe Events Plan. In addition, the broadcast and organic media value of the Melbourne Storm games were significant.



Top: Kiteboarding Australia Freestyle Nationals  
Middle: Mooloolaba Swim Festival  
Bottom: Netfest

# Achievements continued

## Other Initiatives



- Two industry steering groups were facilitated:
  - Regional Marketing & Promotion Industry Group – to encourage promotion of the destination; the use of VSC’s Event Promoters Kit; and the inclusion of VSC’s Head of Marketing on the Working Groups.
  - This resulted in information requested from the industry on sponsorship application forms being simplified to align documentation and gain more visibility on applications and acquittals. Marketing and acquittal checklists were being developed.
  - The Group worked on identifying the engagement of promoters’ social media followings, cross-promotion with other events and opportunities for promoters to utilise their event demographic to suit their marketing.
- Event Industry Development and Networking Group – to conduct conversations with key influencers and gain a better understanding of their perception of the health of the local industry, their aspirations and challenges to help build a stronger local event economy.
  - The group identified a number of key personnel and established a Taskforce to evolve this network.
  - The Taskforce assisted in the coordination of an industry research piece commissioned by Council with the University of the Sunshine Coast to understand the size, scale and value of the events industry on the Sunshine Coast. The group endeavoured to build a network of industry professionals which communicates and collaborates.
  - The Taskforce explored technology solutions with Bizitize and Everi to establish a communication portal for businesses across the Sunshine Coast event industry which will also provide event alerts; and investigated hosting a networking event in the new financial year.
- The Unit was successful with its Austrade Bushfire Grant Application for \$180,000 to stage the Oceania Cup (international rugby league double-header). These funds are to be expended on this event (or an event of this nature) up to May 2022.

Top: Mooloolaba Swim Festival  
Middle: Melbourne Storm v Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles  
Bottom: Barbershop Harmony Australia Regional Convention

- The Economic Development Branch secured a \$1.3 million investment to deliver the 'Train Sunshine Coast' initiative from the Federal and Queensland Governments Local Economic Recovery Funding program. The Train Sunshine Coast soft infrastructure initiative aims to enhance the region's sports economy by maximising the use of regional sporting assets and industry capabilities. The project will help position the Sunshine Coast as a premier destination for high performance sports training and tourism. Work will continue with the Sunshine Coast Stadium and the University of the Sunshine Coast on bringing this to fruition. Projects must be engaged, delivered and paid for by June 2022.
- Council partnered with Water Polo Australia to host the Australian Women's Water Polo Team (the Stingers) on the Sunshine Coast ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The pre-Olympic training camp held in June 2021 was a great success allowing the Stingers to continue training during the COVID-19 outbreak in Sydney. A video is to be prepared showcasing the team's positive local tourism experiences.
- The partnership between Council and Visit Sunshine Coast on the Business Events Assistance Program was reviewed, with contractual documentation tightened to protect both organisations.
- The Australian National Paralympic Swimming Team training camp held on the Sunshine Coast in January 2021 provided an opportunity for Council to access training sessions and produce quality content to highlight the high-performance sports venue and facilities available in the region. The video with testimonials can be used in future promotional activities and content to highlight the region as a premier sports destination.
- Initiated a survey with University of Sunshine Coast to undertake a scoping analysis of the local events industry.
- The Tourism and Major Events Unit enhanced the sponsorship assessment process by ranking and prioritising events anticipated to apply for funding in future years. This made it easier for Board members to understand what sponsorship commitments had already been approved and what was projected, providing a clear indication of what could be accommodated within the budget over the next four years.



Top: Volkswagen Scramble Championship Final  
 Middle: Queensland Gymnastics Club Championships  
 Bottom: SCX



*#S'Events*

## Events.SunshineCoast

Events.SunshineCoast – A new events hub was launched in May 2021, to inform residents and visitors alike about what’s on across the region. The curated online events calendar is easy to use and promotes the Sunshine Coast as a leading host of events of all types and sizes.

The impressive events hub automatically pulls events from different sources to showcase all that the region has on offer in the one place. In addition to sourcing events automatically, the website also allows users to upload events directly to Events.SunshineCoast via the site’s ‘submit an event’ button.

Since the launch of the new events hub, a promotional campaign has commenced to increase awareness of Events.SunshineCoast. A three-week radio and online campaign was undertaken with radio station HOT91 as part of the promotions, which included live reads and ads across their Sunshine Coast, Ipswich and Toowoomba stations, as well as social and web promotion.

In the first two months, Events.SunshineCoast promoted over 2,300 events with 12,000 users and over 32,000 views of the site. With more awareness and continued promotions of Events.SunshineCoast, the number of events and website views is expected to increase.

Events.SunshineCoast attracted 32,000 views in its first two months, with event listings and website views continuing to increase

### Events by category



## Australian Surf Life Saving Championships ('the Aussies')

The Aussies were last staged on the Sunshine Coast in 2016 and we were pleased to welcome them back to the region in 2021.

Spread between Coolum, Maroochydore, Alexandra Headland and Mooloolaba beaches in April 2021, the Aussies consisted of a nine-day festival of surf lifesaving sport action including:

- The Australian Youth Championships (783 competitors)
- The Aussies Ocean Swim (536 competitors)
- The Australian Masters Championships (1,630 competitors)
- The Australian Opens Championships (3,195 competitors)

The program consisted of approximately 480 beach and ocean events and 6,144 participants from surf life saving clubs across Australia competed.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided challenges beyond the usual scope of work for the Aussies, resulting in significant planning to ensure a safe event was delivered.

The Aussies are by far the biggest event on the Coast's calendar and provided significant economic and social benefits to the community.

In addition, the overall media coverage of the Aussies was significant with an audience reach of 31 million at an estimated value of \$9.5 million.

The legacy implications for the Sunshine Coast in hosting this event included:

- An opportunity to position the region to be considered as a regular host venue for the Aussies beyond the current contract period
- The continued awareness and recognition of the Sunshine Coast as a Surf Life Saving Championship venue
- The growing awareness and recognition of the Sunshine Coast as one of Queensland's and Australia's premier venues for major and regional events
- Improvement to beach and back of beach infrastructure for locals and visitors.

Australian Surf Life Saving Championships



'After two years since the last Aussies was held, it was fantastic to see so many people come back together after such a long time apart.'

The Sunshine Coast is an amazing venue for the Aussies with incredible beaches and weather across the championships and we look forward to seeing the Aussies return to the region in the future.

We are very pleased with how the event ran and in partnering with the local Sunshine Coast Council and Tourism and Events Queensland, it ensured that the event ran as smoothly and successfully as it did.'

ADAM WEIR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA

## Sunshine Coast Beach 5s Rugby Festival

The Sunshine Coast Beach 5s Rugby Festival debuted on Council's major events calendar on 6 and 7 February 2021. Beach Rugby Australia added the event to its growing program that included events on the Gold Coast, in Townsville and in Newcastle.

Although the Festival's timing in February presented a pre-season training opportunity for rugby union and rugby league players, which Beach Rugby Australia promoted to clubs in South-East Queensland as a 'pre-season getaway and bonding session', they were unsure of the response.

The response was overwhelming – the Festival was sold out five weeks in advance – and initial estimates of 144 players from outside the Sunshine Coast to actual numbers of 720 players (plus several hundred family and friends who travelled to Mooloolaba with the visiting players).

Beach Rugby Australia created a vibrant atmosphere at Mooloolaba Beach which included a Fan Zone Lounge, a fully licensed Beach Bar (Loo with a View), food and beverage stalls, live entertainment, and grandstand viewing platforms overlooking the playing arenas with a picturesque ocean backdrop. An inflatable arena surrounded the main playing area that hosted the pool games as well as the finals.

If this wasn't enough atmosphere, Beach Rugby Australia invited former rugby league and rugby union international stars such as Lote Tuqiri (dual international), Justin Hodges (rugby league), George Smith (rugby union), Radike Samo (rugby union), Digby Ioane (rugby union) Rico Gear (rugby union) and Jack Reed (rugby league) to play in a special celebrity invitation game and to act as ambassadors for beach rugby.

Given the success of the inaugural festival and its position as the last event on the Beach 5s Summer Series, the 2022 Sunshine Coast 5s Beach Rugby Festival will be promoted as the 'Grand Final'.

'The Mooloolaba Chamber of Commerce supports events being held at a time when business is normally quiet as this generates activity for our businesses and the accommodation industry at a time when it is not classed as holiday season, this enables rooms to be filled when occupancy is normally below average.'

GRAHAM JUNIPER, PRESIDENT, MOOLOOLABA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Sunshine Coast Beach 5s Rugby Festival



The fact that this first-time event attracted 105 separate teams is a true testament to the professionalism of the event organisers, the unique football platform, the unique (perfect) location at Mooloolaba's *Loo with a View* and the support of local volunteers, without whom the event could not have proceeded. I would consider that those players, coaches, managers and supporters brought considerable economic benefit to the local community.

Additionally, the level of local spectator support the event enjoyed from Sunshine Coast locals was a welcome surprise.

The Mooloolaba event was, in my opinion, an outstanding success, from both a football tournament and an overall event perspective. I have little doubt that, given the opportunity, the Mooloolaba Beach 5s Rugby Tournament can cement itself as a premier sporting event on the Sunshine Coast, bringing valuable tourism dollars to the local economy!

SHANE RAISON, TOURNAMENT MANAGER



Mooloolaba Triathlon

## Showcasing the Region through Major Events

Council's existing strategy to maximise marketing and promotion through major events was increased due to the nature of travel restrictions affecting interstate and international patrons attending our events.

The focus and emphasis during 2020/21 have been more on the promotional benefits that events bring, rather than just on visitor numbers.

Over the last two years, detailed data on the marketing and promotional reach of our sponsored events has been collected through Isentia – a professional monitoring service operating specifically for this purpose. As a consequence of focusing on promotional benefits, a significant increase in audience reach has been achieved.

Audience and marketing value of regional promotion through major events excluding broadcasts\*

Measure	2019/20	2020/21
Number of events measured	37**	51
Press, TV, radio items delivered	2,575	4,771
Digital items delivered	3,460	7,592
Total audience reach	53 million	79 million
Commercial advertising value equivalent	\$21.6 million	\$65.5 million

\*Note that measurement is done by financial year, not by event (many events have marketing impact that cross the financial year dates). Some events measured were ultimately cancelled.

\*\*In 2019/20 it was intended to measure every event. Cancellations and postponements due to the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the number of completed and measured events. Note also the 2019/20 figures include data on eight business events for the first time, which have a much lower marketing reach than public major events.

Almost 84 million people learnt more about the attractions of the Sunshine Coast by watching, reading or following the marketing and promotion of our sponsored major events

## Broadcasts

As part of the development of the Major Events Strategy and because of restricted visitor numbers, a large number of events held in the region had a focus on the benefits of broadcasts. This led to a large increase in audience reach through regional promotion of the events that were attracted and supported, which resulted in a higher market value achieved for the sponsored events. Additional data has been gathered in association with broadcasts and their value from a range of highly prevalent national events.

Event	Date	Channel	Duration	Est Audience Reach
Australian Surf Life Saving Championships "Aussies"	24 Apr 21	9GO	2 hours	112,000
Melbourne Storm v Titans	17 July 20	Fox	2 hours	205,000
Melbourne Storm v Titans	17 July 20	Streaming	2 hours	93,693
Melbourne Storm v Knights	2 Aug 20	Nine	2 hours	458,974
Melbourne Storm v Knights	2 Aug 20	Fox	2 hours	271,000
Melbourne Storm v Knights	2 Aug 20	Streaming	2 hours	89,171
Melbourne Storm v Bulldogs	8 Aug 20	Fox	2 hours	215,500
Melbourne Storm v Bulldogs	8 Aug 20	Streaming	2 hours	90,234
Melbourne Storm v Sea Eagles	30 Aug 20	Nine	2 hours	428,003
Melbourne Storm v Sea Eagles	30 Aug 20	Fox	2 hours	190,000
Melbourne Storm v Sea Eagles	30 Aug 20	Streaming	2 hours	85,151
Melbourne Storm v NQ Cowboys	13 Sep 20	Nine	2 hours	443,460
Melbourne Storm v NQ Cowboys	13 Sep 20	Fox	2 hours	214,000
Melbourne Storm v NQ Cowboys	13 Sep 20	Streaming	2 hours	82,645
Melbourne Storm v Wests Tigers	19 Sep 20	Fox	2 hours	248,000
Melbourne Storm v Wests Tigers	19 Sep 20	Streaming	2 hours	108,383
Melbourne Storm v GC Titans	5 Jun 21	Fox	2 hours	274,000
Melbourne Storm v GC Titans	5 Jun 21	Streaming	2 hours	160,319
Melbourne Storm v GC Titans	5 Jun 21	Sky NZ	2 hours	10,200
Melbourne Storm v Wests Tigers	19 Jun 21	Fox	2 hours	273,000
Melbourne Storm v Wests Tigers	19 Jun 21	Streaming	2 hours	144,762
Melbourne Storm v Wests Tigers	19 Jun 21	Sky NZ	2 hours	16,700
NRL Women's State of Origin	25 Jun 21	Nine	2 hours	686,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>4,900,195</b>



NRL Women's State of Origin. Credit National Rugby League



Ministry Of Sport  
**Sunshine Coast COUNCIL**  
2021 WOMEN IN SPORT  
**SUMMIT**

**Sunshine Coast COUNCIL**  
2021 WOMEN  
**SUMMIT**

Foxtel Group  
Women in Sport Summit  
June 2021

Women in Sport Summit. Credit Ministry of Sport

## Industry and Engagement

To gain a greater understanding of events, gather market intelligence, host potential event owners and rights holders and identify future opportunities, Board members and/or Council's Economic Development team hosted or attended the following events during the year:

- Australian Event Awards
- Australian National Paralympic Team training camp
- Australian Water Polo Olympic Team (Stingers) training camp
- COVID Confidence and Capability: Tackling the Tricky Questions Workshops #1 and #2
- DestinationQ Conference (virtual)
- Night Quarter Opening
- NRL Women's State of Origin 'Sunshine Coast – in the Game' famil session and cocktail function
- SCouT tourism industry networking and collaboration day
- Sunshine Coast Chamber Music Festival
- Sunshine Coast Economic Resurgence Taskforce networking event
- 'The Power in Partnerships' industry development and networking event
- Women in Sport Summit





'The Power in Partnerships' Industry Development Function



In addition:

- 'The Power in Partnerships' industry development and networking function was an initiative the Tourism and Major Events Unit led, in partnership with commercial executives from the Melbourne Storm, Sunshine Coast Lightning, and Australian Cycling Academy, for local businesses around the power of commercial partnerships with sporting organisations and major events. There was optimum benefit in utilising this contractual opportunity with the Melbourne Storm to provide insights into how commercial partnerships work, and to hear some case study material with local business Rockcote, who sponsored both the Storm and Lightning in 2020 and experienced great results, as well as new partners Protector Aluminium, and Plungie, and the ARA Group as naming rights partner of the Australian Cycling Academy. The event took place on 18 February 2021 with a total of 85 attendees across the industry participating.
- The NRL Women's State of Origin Sunshine Coast – In the Game family session was undertaken to connect with new and existing contacts within the sports industry in Queensland. It encompassed an informal networking night, site visits to high-performance and entertainment facilities, meetings, and attendance at the match on Friday 13 November. Attendees included representatives from Queensland Rugby Union, UniSport Australia, Football Queensland, Water Polo Queensland, Water Polo Australia, the Johnathan Thurston Academy, and Ministry of Sport.
- The Women in Sport Summit, organised by Ministry of Sport in partnership with Council, took place on Friday 25 June at USC Stadium. Over 150 delegates from leading brand and sports teams/bodies attended the event. This was a fantastic result considering COVID restrictions resulted in speakers and attendees from Sydney being unable to attend, while Melbourne restrictions lifted at 1am on the day of the event, making attendance unlikely. Presenters included: Deputy Director General, 2032 Taskforce, Hon. Kerry Peterson; COO FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, Ms Jane Fernandez (via Zoom); CEO Queensland Rugby League, Mr Rohan Sawyer; CEO Sunshine Coast Lightning, Ms Danielle Smith; Director of Operations, Big Bash Leagues, Ms Belinda Kaey; with Ms Kate Jones the Master of Ceremonies
- Emily Roberts from the Tourism and Major Events Unit was nominated for the Australian Event Awards Young Achiever of the Year award. Emily was shortlisted and named as a national finalist at the Awards Gala dinner held in October 2020.



Spartan Race

# Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2027

Developed by Council in close consultation with the Board and informed through valuable contributions from the tourism and events industry and key regional partners, the Sunshine Coast *Major Events Strategy 2018-2027* provides a ten year framework which seeks to maximise the value of major events to the economy and to the region.

The Strategy can be viewed by visiting Council's website. [sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](http://sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)

Key targets outlined in the plan endorsed in 2018 are:

Strategy goals for 2018	Actual results 2020/21	Strategy goals for 2027
Direct economic impact from major events program averages \$70 million per annum	Direct economic impact from major events program \$50.5 million, partially affected by COVID-19***.	Direct economic impact from the major events program averages \$105 million per annum
Major event projects have an audience reach of 16 million views	Major event projects have an audience reach of almost 84 million views – already exceeding 2027 goals	Major event projects have an audience reach of 40 million views
Sunshine Coast destination preference at 5.7%*	Not yet assessed	Sunshine Coast destination preference at 6.8% (20% increase from 2018 level)
38 event proposals considered in 2017 by Sunshine Coast Events Board	31 major event proposals considered in 2020/21 by Sunshine Coast Events Board (covering 58 individual events)	Industry reputation as a premier event destination drives a 50% increase in enquiries and proposals for quality event projects above 2017 levels
96% of Sunshine Coast residents agree that events attract tourists and raise the profile of the region** - impacts noted in specific areas	Not yet assessed	The Sunshine Coast community continues to support and see the value of major events – maintain over 90% agreement

\* Source: Roy Morgan National Holiday Market Report 2016/17. Destination preference is the percentage of national survey respondents who indicate they would like to travel to the region in the next two years.

\*\* Source: TEQ social indicators research 2017.

\*\*\* Over the last two years the achievement of targets has been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has changed our expectations for major events in the region. Over the remaining years of the Strategy we will continue to strive towards achieving the overall goal set to be achieved by 2027.

 Already exceeding goals

 On the way to achieving goals despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

## Priorities for 2021/2022

The priorities for 2021/22 are about maintaining and supporting as many existing events as possible to keep the industry moving and increase visitor numbers, while at the same time attracting new events which will be assessed for their value in driving the Sunshine Coast's reputation as a major event destination.



Top: State Age Championships  
Middle: Kiteboarding Australia Freestyle Nationals  
Bottom: Sunshine Coast Multisport Festival

Action	Pathway	Link to goals
Target new event acquisition opportunities which align with the full range of the region's assets and unique advantages	1	1,2,3
Conduct an annual scoping review of new and emerging event trends to assess fit with the Sunshine Coast brand, and how these trends might appeal to the region's target audiences	1	1,2,3
Ensure that brand values are reflected in event promotion, signage and captured imagery	1	2,3,5
Develop and implement additional opportunities for travel packages, incorporating quality regional tourism experiences linked to events	1	1,2,3,4,5
Ensure that events with high audience reach potential have the imagery, assets and information to best portray the destination in their promotion and coverage	2	2,3,5,6
Work and engage with existing events to explore opportunities to further leverage audience reach in target markets	2	2,3,5,6
Identify and target key digital influencers related to the event and high value industry to broaden appeal and promotion	2	1,2,3,5
Identify six key projects per year for targeted leveraging to maximise value	3	1,3,5
Investigate matched (or tied) funding for specific leveraging activities to maximise outcomes	3	1,5,6
Develop and implement specific 'leveraging plans' for the targeted events	3	1,3,5
Post event, prepare specific leveraging reports for each targeted event to track outcomes and make future recommendations for support	3	1,2,3,4
Where possible, sign events to three-year contracts to achieve maximum Return on Investments (ROI) over a longer cycle	3	1,2,3

Action	Pathway	Link to goals
Undertaking annual reviews of governance procedures, building on change management and succession planning support where required	4	4,6
Work with key industry stakeholders such as Tourism and Events Queensland and Visit Sunshine Coast to share data on the impact of major events and develop additional methods to track additional outcomes such as repeat visitation from event participants and audiences	4	1,2,3
Sunshine Coast Events Board and Council's Tourism and Major Events Unit continue to advocate for improved regional coordination of major event operations and delivery services	4	4,6
Development of centralised online application tool to increase major event visibility across Council	4	4,6
Actively promote the region's strengths and achievements in hosting major events to key promoters, influencers and the wider event industry	5	2,5,6
Improve outward facing event support information services (websites, etc.) to present clear and professional information to potential event promoters	5	2,5,6
Raise the profile of the Sunshine Coast Events Board and Council through participation and speaking slots at conferences, industry workshops and liaison with key partners (e.g. TEQ)	5	2,5
Develop additional opportunities for famil visits from key industry targets, and hosting of key industry events.	5	1,2,5
Through the targeted leveraging program (Pathway 3) create additional awareness of local supply and opportunities for specific local business alignment and benefit from key event projects	6	4,5
Continue to implement specific communication programs – targeting business and community partners, existing event organisers and prospective event organisers to further promote the outcomes and benefits of the program	6	4,5,6
Ensure meaningful community engagement takes place as part of event planning	6	4,5,6
Engage with businesses through feedback surveys after major events to gauge direct impact, monitor community sentiment and collect testimonials on the positive impact of events	6	4,5,6



Top: Triathlon Pink  
Middle: Etchells Australasian Championship  
Bottom: Mooloolaba Swim Festival



## Further Information

**For further information visit the following websites:**

Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2027

Sunshine Coast Events Board

Sunshine Coast Major Events Sponsorship Program

Events Sunshine Coast

Sunshine Coast Economic Resurgence Plan

Sunshine Coast Council

**Email** [suncoastevents@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:suncoastevents@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)

**Phone** 07 5475 7272

**Mail** Sunshine Coast Council, Locked Bag 72,  
Sunshine Coast Mail Centre, Queensland 4560





Caloundra Triathlon



 **Sunshine Coast** COUNCIL | Our region.  
**Healthy. Smart. Creative.**

[sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](http://sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)  
[mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)  
T 07 5475 7272 F 07 5475 7277  
Locked Bag 72 Sunshine Coast Mail Centre Qld 4560

 @sunshinecoastcouncil  @councilscc  @sunshinecoastcouncil